

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES \$30 MILLION EFFORT TO CREATE NEW HIGH SCHOOLS

RALEIGH - Gov. Mike Easley today announced an \$11 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to create high schools in North Carolina that better prepare students for work and college. The grant is the first part of what will be a \$30 million initiative to create more than 40 new and redesigned high schools around the state with funding from government, private businesses and other foundations.

"In order to recruit new industries to the state, create more jobs and build a more highly skilled workforce in North Carolina, we must ensure that our students graduate high school with the tools they need for success," said Easley. "Our high schools must provide high-quality educational opportunities for all our students, not just those on an academic track. By creating new or transforming existing high schools, we can increase our graduation rate, produce a better trained workforce and prepare more students to move on to college. This agenda is imperative for us as we transition into a more knowledge-based economy."

Many education experts believe large, impersonal high schools, where students tend to get lost in the shuffle, can exacerbate low achievement and poor graduation rates. Smaller, more focused high schools that provide personal attention and rigorous coursework are better suited to helping all types of students succeed.

The New High School Project will start approximately 40 new and redesigned high schools across the state over the next five years. The project will work with school districts, in partnership with community colleges, public and private colleges and universities, nonprofit and business partners, to create new schools and transform large, impersonal high schools into smaller, more personalized learning environments. The schools will include innovative models that offer accelerated learning and tie education to workplace knowledge and skills. The project will focus on both rural and urban areas and create innovative new opportunities in each of the state's economic development regions.

The project will be overseen by the North Carolina Education Cabinet, which is chaired by the Governor and includes the presidents of the university, community college and private college systems, the State Superintendent and the Chairman of the State Board of Education. It will be managed by the Public School Forum, a business-education nonprofit based in Raleigh.

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